Upgrade will start around 9:30PM ET, one hour or less downtime hopefully.

Disastrous results from using pruning sealers and wax

Peng **Aug 2023**

I would like to share some of my results of using pruning sealers and wax on several types of trees and the bad results I noticed.

I'm new to growing fruit trees. This year I planted many fruit trees and applied wax/sealant after pruning them in spring. The pruning was done to get the desired shapes I wanted for the trees (e.g. open vase for plum and peaches and KGB for cherries). I used 3 products - beeswax, tree wound dressing, and pruning sealer.

GARDEN Rich
Pruning Sealer
Protective seal for
pruned or damaged
trees, shrubs, roses.
Brush top applicator
Keep Out Of Reach Of Children
CAUTION: FLAMMABLE (See side panels for additional Precautionary Statements and First Aid)
Net Contents 16 FL. OZ. (1 Pint) (473 ML.)

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Until recently, I noticed that many of them did not heal well and some were even producing brown sap. So I decided to scrape off the wax/sealant on top of the pruning cuts. I noticed a lot of black/pink discoloration on the xylem part of the wood. Several cherry branches were producing sap/gummosis, and one plum branch was also producing sap as well.

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These two pictures show gummosis after I cut off the top part of this branch. You can see the discoloration going through the xylem. Does anyone know what caused this?

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After removing the top of the branch, the remaining wood still has this discoloration.

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Worried about an infection, I decided to cut down more of the wood until a clean surface was revealed.

However, when I bought this 4-in-1 pluot tree, the nursery used another type of sealant on it (a head cut on the rootstock/interstem). This sealing material produced less discoloration and no gummosis. When I scraped it off (please ignore the beeswax I had applied on top of their sealant), the wood underneath looked aged light brown and smooth.

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This picture shows the yellow material the nursery had put on. It is definitely not the beeswax or black wound dressings I used. It is yellow and elastic - almost like silicone/latex/rubber. I’m very intrigued as to why this material worked better on this plum tree, whereas the ones I used produced some kind of dark-colored infections deep into the wood, even gummosis.

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This picture shows the surface after the nursery's yellow sealant was removed. One noticeable difference - when I removed their sealant, I also cleaned out their phloem, and the phloem was green, indicating immediately underneath this nursery's sealant, the phloem was alive, whereas the phloem was dead or rotting under the beeswax/other two types wound dressings I used. I'm puzzled. How did their silicone-like sealant produce such a different result? And I notice a mulberry tree from another nursery also used this type of sealant (and the same yellow color too!). Please see the picture below:

On a European plum tree, I had also applied beeswax on all of the pruning/heading cuts. I decided to remove all of them.

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This branch looked horrible after I removed the top 1/2" of it, including the wax. So I decided to remove more but also collect the next 1" of wood and cut it apart vertically to reveal the inside.

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So I obtained this section.

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This is the vertical cross-section view. It shows the development of this discoloration. I do not know if it is some sort of fungus. But it clearly dug into the xylem of this branch.

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This is the top view of the left half.

I proceeded to remove any discolored wood until I could not see any more dark discoloration. However, there are some trees that I couldn’t go much further because cutting further would seriously impact the branches on the trunk.

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